

Announcing ...
The 44th Annual Swim Around Key West
(12.5 miles)

Presented by: The Key West Athletic Association

Date

Saturday, June 6, 2020

Time

First Wave Start: 7:30 a.m.

Second Wave Start: 8:00 a.m.

Headquarters Location

The large tent situated on the west end of Smathers Beach

Race Location

Start/Finish: West End of Smathers Beach (Atlantic side)

Registration and Mandatory Pre-Race Meeting

Friday, June 5, 2020

at Headquarters on Smathers Beach

All Applicant Sign-in and Packet Pickup: 3:00-5:45 p.m.

Pre-Race Meeting: 6:00 p.m.

Post-Race Awards and Raffle

Saturday, June 6 (after the Swim)

3:30 p.m. at Headquarters Tent

Apply Online: swimaroundkeywest.com

Online applications open Feb. 3, 2020, at 8 a.m. EST

(We no longer accept paper applications.)

Please read carefully and thoroughly.

Welcome and thank you for your interest in the Annual Swim Around Key West. Our scheduled date for the 44th Annual Swim is Saturday, June 6, 2020.

Our event open water swim. It is tied to the tides. This is why the dates and starting times change from year to year. The high tide in the Key West Harbor on June 6, 2020, is at 10:31 a.m. Our traditional start time for the first wave is 3 hours before high tide in the harbor. That tradition continues this year. That means we will start the first wave at 7:30 am. The bulk of the swimmers and relays will begin approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes before the high tide in the Harbor. This is the traditional start time for this wave. And this second wave of swimmers will start at 8:00 am.

Each Category will be capped at the following numbers:

Solo Swimmer: 120

Two-Person Relay: 15 teams

Three-Person Relay: 25 teams

As each category caps, that category will close. There is no waiting list.

Background: This swim is the historic, classic, "around-the-island" swim begun in 1977 by Anna Fugina. Anna had suffered injuries from a car accident, and she chose to begin swimming as therapy to assist in her recovery. As her health improved, so did her swimming ability and love for the sport.

Anna wondered if it was possible to swim the circumference of the island of Key West. Though she inquired, she could find no evidence that anyone had even attempted the challenge, much less completed the swim. She concluded that someone had to be the first, so on July 4, she entered the water at Mallory Square at Key West Harbor. It was 12:59 later that she completed the swim. Soon after, she found out that if she studied the tidal current, the swim would be an easier task. Anna swam again in 1978 and improved her time considerably, finishing at eight hours.

The current record finishing time is 3:31:28 set by Gabe Lindsey in 1999. Any first-place swimmer who beats that record time will be awarded with \$1,000 at our awards ceremony following the Swim.

Every entered swimmer will receive a technical T-shirt listing the overall first place swimmers and their finish times from 1977 to present. The front of the T-shirt features the original artwork of local Key West artist Abigail White.

Safety: The Annual Swim Around Key West is presented by the Key West Athletic Association. It is an independent unaffiliated event. It is insured by Frazier Insurance Agency. It is acknowledged by the U.S. Coast Guard.

In order to secure the Coast Guard approval, the organizers must submit a safety plan, which must be approved by the local sector of the U.S. Coast Guard. The Coast Guard holds the authority to pull permission at any time. If they sense the event is unsafe to any participants or if the event organizers fail to successfully execute the plan, the Coast Guard has the right to deny the permission for the next year's date.

We are pleased to report that we have an amicable working relationship with the local sector of the U.S. Coast Guard and that they have approved our requested date of June 6, 2020. To date, we have a very favorable safety record.

We make great effort to assure there is a sufficient number of "Committee Boats" to observe and assist swimmers on the course. These boats are identified with prominently displayed yellow flags. Their sole task is to observe and attend the safety needs our swimmers and their escort vessels. Swimmers will be given

the cell phone number of our race director, as well as his radio frequency in laminated plastic. We expect our swimmers to urge their escort boaters to keep those numbers in a handy place. However, there will most likely be a "Committee Boat" within distance in case of any emergency.

As mentioned, the Coast Guard has the authority to cancel the event if they deem the conditions too severe to carry on the event. Since we have no control over the weather, in consultation with the U.S. Coast Guard, if we deem the weather unacceptable for the swim, the race director will terminate the event and there is no alternate date and there are no refunds. The race director's decisions are final. The 36th Annual Swim was extremely rough, and we were closer to canceling the swim than ever in the history of the event. Since then, conditions have been much improved.

A copy of the safety plan will be available to any participants upon request.

No Refund Policy: In the unfortunate case **you** need to cancel, there will be no refund of any application fees. In the unfortunate event **we** must cancel the swim there will be no refund of the application fees. Please don't ask for a refund for your application fee.

No waiting list: Once we cap a category it is closed and there is no waiting list.

Support Escort Vessel: All swimmers **MUST** have a support vessel. Do not arrive on the beach, on the day of the event with no support vessel and expect the organizers to provide you with a support vessel. This will not happen!

- **Solo** swimmers generally choose to have a kayak with a kayaker next to them. The kayak is able to stay close to the swimmer, providing the swimmer with protection from dangers such as motorboats or jet skis, and also to provide the nutritional and hydration needs for the swimmer's success.
- **Relay teams** usually choose a motorboat. While supplying the swimmers with safety, hydration and sustenance, the boat will carry the other relay members to the transition points. At the start, the lead swimmer will be in the water and the team-mate(s) will be in the boat. **There are no land entries for relay swimmers.** (Transition points for relay swimmers are clearly marked by large inflatable buoys. There is a buoy at mile 6 for the two-person relay, and a buoy at miles 4 and 8 for the three-person relay.)

Many relay teams also choose to have a kayaker as an additional support vessel. We highly recommend this (note: this is not required unless your relay support motorboat will be late to your wave start) as it allows the kayaker to remain close

to the swimmer while the motorboat remains at a safe distance from its swimmer and others on the course. Motorboats must be extremely vigilant of swimmers in the water. Stay far enough away to avoid spewing exhaust on all swimmers in the race!

Some relay teams choose to use only a kayak for their particular team, switching amongst themselves while the other teammate(s) paddle/swim. This can certainly be done (and has been), but please be certain you will be able to paddle after swimming 4 or 6 miles. If not, your team will be disqualified, and your teammate(s) will not be too happy with you! This situation happened a few years ago in the two-person relay. The first swimmer finished her leg of the swim and then could not paddle for her teammate. Even though the teammate was fully ready to swim, the team had to be disqualified as there was not a kayaker to accompany her. Remember, if the weather is rough or windy, paddling can be even more difficult than swimming. Be prepared.

Relay teams must bring or rent their own boats. Some rental agencies can be found on our website. Information about local kayak rental will also be available on the swimaroundkeywest.com website.

Please note: We do not endorse any of these companies. Be sure you check the boat well before the swim to make sure that it is seaworthy and acceptable to you. Make sure it has all the safety features required by the U.S. Coast Guard. Tell the company that you need a vessel that will go under both the Fleming Cut Bridge and the Cow Key Channel Bridge.

All support vessels will be given an orange pennant on a rod with the number of the solo swimmer or the relay team. On swim day, that numbered pennant must be placed prominently on the kayak or boat so as to be visible to all. If a relay team has a motorboat and a kayak the kayak should be designated the primary support and hence will carry the orange numbered pennant.

Swimmers who show up for the swim without a support vessel will be disqualified.

(Remember, it is the swimmer's responsibility to tip the kayakers and support boat crews, not the organizers of this event! However, as a show of our appreciation, we welcome, without cost, all kayakers and support boat crew members to enjoy our post-race refreshments on the beach.)

Kayak/Kayaker Service: In order to facilitate solo swimmers who, have no kayak and kayaker, the organizers of the Swim will offer a service for the needy solo swimmers. For \$210, we will provide the kayak AND the kayaker.

The breakdown is:

\$110 Honorarium to the kayaker (which we will pay the kayaker after the swim is completed)

\$ 60 Kayak rental to the outfitters. (delivery and pick up at the start/finish line guaranteed)

\$ 40 Service fee to the Kayak Coordinator

Total: \$210

This service is limited to the first 35 swimmers, and we will not honor requests submitted after May 8, 2020. Solo swimmers, if you wish to take advantage of this service, please tick the box on the solo application. Please note that this is a package deal. We will not seek out just kayaks or just kayakers for solo swimmers.

For solo swimmers who hire their own kayakers, we are often asked what sort of honorarium to give the kayaker. Considering that the kayaker must be at the pre-race meeting and will spend a full day on the water protecting and feeding you, we suggest a minimum of \$110 for such a service.

The Swim: This is a warm water swim. Since the swim is June 6 this year, the water temperatures could likely be between 82 and 86 degrees. Swimmers coming from the north will have not been exposed to the sun since the previous summer and since we do not allow any special "skins" to protect the skin of the swimmers, we recommend zinc oxide to cover the body of the swimmer. Conventional sunscreens are not very helpful as they wash off in a couple of hours. zinc oxide ointment can be purchased from most supermarkets or pharmacies. You will need to look in the Baby Care section of the store.

The most enduring zinc oxide ointment is Desitin Maximum Strength (it is 40% Zinc oxide). You can find Desitin Max in one-pound jars, which is the most economical purchase. Another product 40% Zinc product is called Butt Paste. It also can also be found in the Baby Care section of many stores. It does not come in a pound jar but only in 2 and 4 oz. tubes. It is more expensive but since it does not contain fish oil, it smells better. Zinc products containing less than 40% Zinc will not provide full protection from the sun. Zinc is a pain to remove from your skin. (Try vegetable oil or baby oil and know the Zinc WILL stain your swimsuit.)

The Race Organizer (and fellow swimmers) has found great benefit from a product called SolRx sunblock. This product is easier to apply than maximum strength zinc oxide and washes off with soap and water. It applies clear and seems to protect the skin from burn for a full 8 hours. (You can learn more at SolRx.com) or read Bill's review of SolRx on our website. He uses the Clear Zinc Sun Screen (Reef-Friendly) SPF 50. This product is also oxybenzone free.

The sun is the hottest from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. A wet swimmer cannot re-apply sunscreen, so make sure if you are in the water during those hours you apply a thick coat before you enter the water. We can't emphasize skin protection enough!

Another important consideration is hydration. Saltwater and the hot tropical sun mean that hydration is essential to a successful swim. We suggest all swimmers drink liquid every 20 to 30 minutes while in the water.

There are a couple of areas where the swimmers will benefit from the tide. When you enter the Key West Harbor, you will find a push for about two plus miles. This will end when you come out under the Fleming Cut Bridge at mile 5. At mile 9, you will be swimming under the Cow Key Bridge and should have a good push for about one mile. This push will vary depending on your speed and when you enter these areas. Lead swimmers may have a mild current against them for the mile through the Cow Key Channel.

Why two starting times? The reason for the two-wave start is to assist swimmers who are slower. If the swimmer doesn't get into Key West Harbor before the tide changes, he/she will be forced to swim against the tide, diminishing the chance of success.

You ask, "How can I know if I should start in the first wave?" If you swim one mile in a pool and your time is 40 minutes or more for one mile, we recommend you consider the first wave. If your time for one mile in a pool is 39 minutes or less, you should be fine in the second wave.

There is an eight-hour limit beginning with the first wave at 7:30 a.m. Any solo swimmers OR relay teams choosing to enter the first wave start and completing the course will receive a finisher's medals but will not be eligible for any placement awards or trophies.

The finisher medals are only awarded to solo swimmers and relay teams who complete the full course within 8 hours. The swim cutoff time is 8 hours. After 8 hours, we will send out a boat to pick up any swimmers still on the course.

If the water is calm, you will see much sea life, such as tarpon, rays, colorful tropical fish, conch shells on the bottom, perhaps a sea turtle, etc. You may see a nurse shark; they are docile. In the history of our event, no one has ever been attacked by a shark. We have Portuguese Men of War but only in December through February. Portuguese Men of War have never been seen in the water after early March at the latest. Historically, the swim has been very safe.

You will be swimming clockwise around the Island. Since you are swimming in a circle, it is never boring. You will never see the same thing twice. Also, if the conditions are challenging on one side, keep in mind that after you turn the next bend, conditions will change. The headwind will eventually become a tailwind and vice versa.

Solo Swimmers: We will cap the solo entry at **120 swimmers**. Any swimmer applying after the cap is met will be rejected. In 2015, we capped the solo category in less than one week. The solo category seems to close sooner each year. It pays to apply early! Once we cap, that is it. There will be no waiting list.

The fee for a solo swimmer is \$180.00. If the category is not filled by March 1, the application fee is increased to \$190.00, and after April 1, the application fee increases to \$200.00 per solo swimmer. No applications will be accepted after May 8, 2020. It pays apply early. We no longer offer paper application forms.

Relay teams: We have separate applications for each category. Make sure you fill out the proper application. We have two-person and three-person relays. Each teammate must fill out his/her application separately and completely. When you apply online, you MUST complete the required information for ALL team members at the time you apply.

The cap for the relay teams is: **15 two-person** teams and **25 three-person** teams. The application fee for a two-person team is \$330 If this category is not filled: after March 1, that increases to \$350 and after April 1 to \$370. Once 15 teams apply, this category will close.

Three-person teams must pay an application fee of \$450. If the category is still open: after March 1, the fee increases to \$470, and after April 1 it increases to \$490. Once 25 three-person teams are entered, this category will close.

Remember, there will be no land entries for relay swimmers. Transition points for relay swimmers are clearly marked by buoys at mile 6 for the two-person relay and at miles 4 and 8 for the three-person relay.

Please note: Each relay swimmer must complete his/her entire leg before exiting the water. Once that swimmer reaches the transition buoy, the next swimmer will enter the water and swim his/her entire distance. If a swimmer does not complete the full length of his/her distance and exits the water before the proper transition, that relay team will be disqualified.

All applications are available on our swimaroundkeywest.com website. We close all applications on May 8, 2020.

Swim Suits and Apparel: There has been some controversy over what an acceptable suit is in this swim. The Annual Swim Around Key West has chosen to adopt the following rule for swimsuits. Please read this carefully:

Swim Costume: A swimmer may wear only one suit. Swimsuits shall not cover a man's body higher than the top of the pelvic bone or the belly button and shall not cover any part of the body below the mid-knee. Swimsuits shall not cover a woman's body outside the shoulder-joints or above the shoulder-line and shall not cover any part of the body below mid-knee. The material of suits may consist only of cotton, lycra, nylon, polyester and spandex. Any swimmer wishing to compete in a suit constructed of other materials must apply to the Annual Swim Around Key West for permission in writing. If you have any doubt as to what suit you will be permitted to wear in this open water event, please check with the Race Director.

No swimsuits extending below the mid knee, body suits, wet suits or “skins” are allowed. *Silicone, nylon or latex caps ARE permitted. No fins, no snorkels are permitted.*

Please take this seriously, as we take this requirement seriously. You will be disqualified if your suit does not meet this description. It is ungracious to place the Race Director in the position of disqualifying you on race day.

Awards: This year we will be awarding the following categories to finishing swimmers.

Solo Awards: The overall solo finisher will have his/her name placed on the back of the official T-shirt and placed on the official plaque. The overall first place winners (both male and female) will receive free entry into the following year's Swim.

Any solo swimmer finishing in first place and breaking the time of 3:31:28 (the record set by Gabe Lindsey in 1999) will be awarded \$1,000 at the awards ceremony following the Swim. Solo awards will go three deep for both overall male and female solo swimmers. Awards will go two deep for Master's category (over 40 years old) in both male and female. There will be one award to the Grand Master (over 50) and one to the Senior Grand Master (over 60) in both male and female.

All solo swimmers completing the full course will receive a sterling silver finisher's medallion upon exiting the water and entering the beach area.

Relay Awards: Awards will go three deep for each category of relay, for both the two- and the three-person relay. There will be no distinction between male and female teams for relay awards.

We will award finisher's medals to all relay teams upon their completion of the full course. The final swimmer will be given all the medals for his/her team to pass out to the other relay members if they are not present at the finish.

Accommodations: Please check our website for updates about hotel discounts and special rates.

Pre-Race Registration: Our Headquarters will be a very large tent situated at the start/finish area on the west end of Smathers Beach (the Atlantic side). All applicants may register their presence for the swim at this site on Friday, June 5, 2020, between 3:00 p.m. until 5:45 p.m. At the time you register, you will receive your info packet, T-shirt and “goody bag.” Relay teams will receive their orange pennant with your team number at registration. Solo swimmers will receive their numbered pennant at the beach *check-in* the morning of the swim at the time the swimmer has his/her body marked. This pennant must be placed prominently on

your support vessel. If the pennant is not clearly visible on your support craft, you will be disqualified from the event.

Mandatory Pre-race Meeting for all swimmers and support boat crew: At the pre-race registration site, promptly at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, June 5, 2020 we will begin our pre-race meeting. Information will be given as to rules, the course and other pertinent directions and instructions. Questions will be taken and answered. The goal will be to have all swimmers and kayakers and support crews out of the meeting by 7:15 p.m.

Swim Day: You must *check in* at west end Smathers Beach (on the Atlantic side-west end near the restrooms) from 6:15-7:00 a.m. for the first wave swimmers. Second wave swimmers should not arrive any later than 7:00 am for the 8:00 am start.

Swimmers should be on the beach an hour before your wave start. Once you check in, you must have your body marked with your solo or team number. This is the time to organize your kayak with your provisions, get your zinc oxide/sunscreen on your skin and work out last minute strategy with your kayaker. Time will pass quickly, so get out to the beach early avoiding rushing.

Post Swim on the Beach: We will have drinks and refreshments (grilled hot dogs and hamburgers, fruit, etc.) on the beach as the swimmers begin to arrive. If you prefer different post-race recovery food or drink, please bring it with you.

Post-Race Awards: The post-race awards ceremony will be on the beach, under the tent at 3:30 p.m. In addition to the distribution of awards, there will be a raffle with free gifts and gift certificates from local businesses. There will be other surprises as well! Family members, kayakers and support boat crews are invited to enjoy the refreshments on the beach but will not be eligible for raffle prizes.

The Annual Swim Around Key West has chosen to donate any profit after all our bills are paid to the Cross-Country Team of the Key West High School. After the 43rd Annual Swim, we were pleased to be able to give this group a check for **\$4,300.00** Our hope is to increase this amount after the 44th Annual Swim.

Thank you once again for your interest in the 44th Annual Swim Around Key West (12.5 miles). Train well!

Bill Welzien, Organizer (on behalf of the Committee)

112 Completed Career Swims Around Key West

First completed across and back swim of the span of the 7-Mile Bridge